# Protein, America's hero nutrient, is evolving to be more about quality and less about quantity















## Protein Singled Out As Key Nutrient

Early science and marketing of protein for health and strength set the stage for the future popularity of protein.

1950s: Bodybuilder
Bob Hoffman
pioneered the first
commercial protein
shakes.

#### Low-Fat Craze Overshadows Protein

The mainstreaming of bodybuilders in the 80s and 90s solidified the link between protein and muscle building. But protein remained secondary to low-fat, calorie-conscious eating.

1980s: Alongside the rise of snacking, protein intake shifted as bars, shakes and meal replacements grew in popularity.

### Rise Of Protein Diets & Fortification in CPG

Protein reemerged as a weight-loss tool with a focus on low-carb, high-protein diets. This led to a massive boom in protein-enhanced products like yogurt, meal bars and protein shakes.

The Atkins Diet became one of the 50 best-selling books of all time by the early 2000s despite being published in 1982.

### Diversification Of Protein Sources

Motivated by health and sustainability, plant-based proteins & meat analogues mainstreamed, and consumers turned to protein for satiety & longevity.

Burger available at restaurants, signaled interest in techdriven proteins.

#### Protein Everywhere, All The Time

The rise of functionality and GLP-1 trends fuels protein's expansion across categories, while the pandemic, sustainability and ultraprocessed concerns drive focus on nutrient density, quality and sourcing.

 More protein added in unexpected places, like ice cream, chips & bread.

#### Better & Purposeful, Not More, Protein

Driven by progressive consumers, the future of protein will be about its quality, sustainability and precision—no longer just consuming more protein.

Pendulum will swing back to less processed, whole food sources as consumers learn how much protein their own bodies need.